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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE 20 WEST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

LONGACRE 3-6890

Official Organ: The Crisis



Sept.
27th
1946

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

One of the most challenging aspects of the NAACP's program is the new Labor Department. Under the supervision of Clarence Mitchell, former Director of Field Operations for the Fair Employment Practice Committee, action in this field is already under way on some of the vital problems such as full utilization of labor in the Veterans Housing Program and the establishment of standards against discrimination for the United States Employment Service.

In its July meeting, the Board of Directors voted to establish a committee to work with Mr. Mitchell in achieving the objectives of this part of the Association's activity. A copy of the proposed labor program is enclosed for your study. This will be subject to discussion and revision as determined by the Committee when the first meeting is held.

I am writing you to ask that you serve as a member of this important group. Because all the members will be busy and there will be much demand on their time from other sources, we are planning four meetings a year for this Committee. We shall poll the members by correspondence or personal contact on any important policy matters which may come up between meetings.

It is my earnest hope that you will agree to serve.

Ever sincerely

Secretary

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Hyde Park
New York

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(Proposed Program)

NAACP LABOR DEPARTMENT

OBJECTIVES

1. Elimination of: discriminatory employment practices in industry and government which result in refusal to hire colored workers, wage differentials based on race, unequal opportunities for training and promotion, unfair dismissals, and segregation in employment because of race.
2. Greater participation of colored persons in the trade union movement.
3. Ending of segregated locals, auxiliaries, and any other discriminatory practices in labor unions.
4. Passage of state and federal FEPC legislation.
5. Inclusion of non-discrimination clauses in state and federal laws pertaining to the employment of persons in the execution of government contracts.
6. Joining with labor unions for the enactment of legislation favored by labor and for the repealing of unfavorable labor legislation.
7. Expanding and improving opportunities for vocational training on the basis of non-segregation.

STRUCTURE

The Secretary of the Labor Department is responsible to the Executive Secretary of the Association. The work of this department shall be coordinated with the activities of the Legal Department and the Branch Department by regular meetings with the Secretary and these department heads.

There shall be formed a labor committee of Board members and such other persons as may be needed to further the objectives of this program. Labor committees shall also be formed in local branches.

DUTIES

The National Committee shall work with the Secretary in achieving the objectives of this program. This committee shall also make recommendations to the Board of Directors on the labor policy to be followed by the NAACP. This shall include recommendations on the endorsement or rejection of proposed labor legislation.

Local committees shall initiate, within the framework of a specified operating procedure, positive action to achieve the objectives of this program.

Branch labor committees shall also receive and investigate complaints alleging discrimination because of race in hiring, upgrading, wage payments, training, or dismissals from employment.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH UNIONS

It shall be the duty of branches to keep informed on the local practices of labor unions. This includes giving assistance in building the membership of those unions organizing on a non-segregated basis.

Some unions such as the United Automobile Workers have extensive machinery against discrimination. Branch labor committees should become familiar with this machinery and urge local union officials to make it work. In other cases locals of international unions with discriminatory policies are working to eliminate such policies. This is true in the case of the International Association of Machinists. Although the union has a prohibition against Negroes in its ritual, many locals have actually included colored persons and in recent conventions of the machinists, the vote to eliminate the color bar has gained new support. The branch committee can speed up this type of progress by informing the National Office of liberal persons in such unions who may be counted on to give support to a plan of ending discriminatory features. Whenever local unions are negotiating contracts with management, the branch committee should seek the inclusion of non-discrimination clauses in such contracts both as to hiring and conditions of employment. Whenever such requests are made, the National Office should be advised in order that it may obtain assistance from the international union on this matter.

It is important that branch labor committees promote a more active participation of Negroes in local unions. This means that committee representatives should meet with local union officials to study ways of increasing those meetings during which important policy questions are being discussed or elections are being held.

LABOR LEGISLATION

The labor committee of the branch shall have the responsibility of reporting to the National Office any proposed city ordinances or state laws which are against the best interest of labor. Also favorable legislation proposed shall be submitted to the National Office in order that the Association may have a uniform policy on such matters throughout the country. Such legislation shall be studied jointly by the labor and legal departments of the National Office. In submitting matters of this kind the recommendations of the branch shall be included. It is important that this phase of the program be given careful attention. Numerous state bills and proposed city Fair Employment Practice are being submitted in various parts of the country. The NAACP should endorse only the strongest and best of such legislative proposals. In addition, various state legislatures undertake the passage of hostile labor laws which should be defeated because of the adverse effect they have on the progress of organized labor with the resultant ill effect on colored persons.

By showing its recognition of the common objectives existing for both colored persons and labor, the NAACP will promote increased harmony between these groups.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The branch labor committee shall work with the education committee (where the latter exists) in evaluating local tax-supported vocational programs. Where such programs fail to offer equal opportunity for colored and white students, the labor committee shall take action to eliminate such inequality. The National Office labor department shall be kept informed on such matters in order that it may give advice and assistance in handling them.